

SUMMARY OF BOARD ITEM

ITEM # 03-3-1: Public Meeting to Consider a Health Update –
Ozone And Health Effects: Asthmatics

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Informational Item

DISCUSSION: Staff will update the Board on a published paper on
ozone exposure and health effects in asthmatics.

SUMMARY AND IMPACTS: The impact of ozone on public health is a serious
concern to health officials. The 2000 review of state
ambient air quality standards – jointly conducted by
ARB and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard
Assessment (OEHHA) – ranked ozone as the
second highest priority for formal reassessment and
possible revision due to its effect on children and
other sensitive populations. That process is
currently underway, with Board consideration
tentatively scheduled for the end of 2003.

Some epidemiological studies suggest that
asthmatic individuals may be at greater risk of
adverse effects, compared to nonasthmatics, when
exposed to ambient ozone. Since most asthmatics
have the allergic form of the disease, one possible
explanation for the epidemiological observations is
that ozone interacts in some way with allergic
responses, resulting in a greater adverse response
than would be induced by exposure to either ozone
or allergen alone. The paper to be presented
provides evidence for this hypothesis, and has
implications for future standard setting because of
its contribution to explaining the impact of ozone
exposure on asthmatics.

